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The High Civil Service Corps in the Last Period of the Multi-Ethnic Empire between National and Imperial Loyalties

*Peter Urbanitsch**

Abstract: The target of this study is constituted by leading civil officials mainly of the Ministry of Interior (Section leaders and ministerial counselors) as well as members of the local political authority (court counselors, 'Land' presidents and state representatives) in the Cisleithanian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The research is based on samples of those occupying these positions between 1900 and 1910; in some cases information is given dating back to the 1880ies. The survey extends over geographical extraction, family background, educational path and career of all those in the sample. The official activities of these civil servants are scrutinized following questions raised in the title of the paper. Obviously enough they were above all committed to the imperial state. Still there is a number of indicators that they did not remain unaffected – though to variable degrees – by their regional and national connections. These indicators should be thoroughly researched in concrete terms, together with additional references to the final political options of members of our target group after the end of the Habsburg Monarchy.

“Well, Your Excellency, being a Civil Servant it seems that you have only the choice between being an anarchist or an idiot”.¹ It may well be that this satirical phrase coined by the eminent writer Arthur Schnitzler can be used with some justification for one or the other individual member among the great number of higher officials serving the Emperor Francis Joseph in the late Habsburg Monarchy. Yet there can be no doubt whatsoever that the High Civil Service as a whole and as a group distinct from others must be regarded as one of the elite-groups within the society of the Habsburg Monarchy. It is common knowledge that the power-elite of the High Civil Service – together with the person of the Emperor himself and with the army – formed the very pillar and backbone of

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¹ „Ja, Exzellenz, es scheint – als Beamter da hat man nur die Wahl, Anarchist oder Trottel“, ARTHUR SCHNITZLER, Professor Bernhardt, 5. Akt (Wien 1912), cited by WALTRAUD HEINDL, Bürokratie zwischen absolutistischer Staatsmacht und rechtsstaatlicher Entwicklung; in: JIŘÍ POKORNÝ, LUBOŠ VELEK, ALICE VELKOVÁ (Hgg.), Nacionalismus, Společnost a Kultura ve střední Evropě 19. a 20. století. Pocta Jiřímu Kořalkovi k 75. narozeninám/Nationalismus, Gesellschaft und Kultur in Mitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Jiří Kořalka zum 75. Geburtstag (Praha 2007) 155-167, here 155.

the Habsburgs' rule in their multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state in the last decades before the outbreak of the First World War.²

But before analyzing this group in some detail it seems necessary to give further information on how this group is constituted – who is part of this survey and who is not – and on the data basis for the statistical survey. According to the civil service laws and regulations that came into being in the second half of the 19th century in Cisleithania³ – and it is only the officials serving the Cisleithanian, Austrian, state and not the Hungarian ones or the ones employed in the so called common ministries⁴, that will be dealt with in this paper – the Civil Service Corps was hierarchically divided into 11 ranks [“Rangklassen”], thus defining the exact position (and the salary) of every single member within the bureaucratic machinery.⁵ The first and highest rank was occupied by the Prime Minister, the second by the other ministers and by some presidents of the High Courts, the third was confined to the Governors in the provinces [“Statthalter”], the fourth to the divisional heads in the ministries, the “Sektionschefs”, and the fifth to “Ministerialräte” and “Hofräte”, senior officials in the central and provincial administration. In accordance to the overall theme of this paper – the High Civil Service Corps – only members of the III., IV. and V. rank, having been active in the years between 1901 and 1910, form the material basis for the considerations to follow. Senior officials of the I. and the II. rank, in other words: Prime Ministers and ministers, have been included only if they had been civil servants before or after having been appointed to their ministerial posts (thus excluding politicians as ministers), something that was not uncommon in the years before the outbreak of World War I.⁶ In putting together this sample – the names of the persons were taken from the volumes of

² For the importance of Francis Joseph in this respect see PETER URBANITSCH, *Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities: The Dynastic Myth of the Habsburg Monarchy – a Futile Exercise in the Creation of Identity?*; in: *Austrian History Yearbook* 35 (2004) 101-141. DANIEL L. UNOWSKY, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism. Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (=Central European Studies, West Lafayette, Ind. 2005). For the army see JOHANN CHRISTOPH ALLMAYER-BECK, *Die bewaffnete Macht in Staat und Gesellschaft*; in: ADAM WANDRUSZKA, PETER URBANITSCH (Hgg.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918 V: Die bewaffnete Macht* (Wien 1987) 1-141.

³ For details see KARL MEGNER, *Beamte. Wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte des k.k. Beamtentums* (=Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie 21, Wien 1985).

⁴ For those see among others ÉVA SOMOGYI, *Im Dienst der Monarchie oder der Nation? Ungarische Führungsbeamte am Ballhausplatz*; in: *Österreichische Osthefte* 44 (2002) 595-626.

⁵ MEGNER, *Beamte* 40 f., 135, 336.

⁶ In the period under consideration there were 58 ministers in office, 16 of them belonged to the Civil Service Corps. 9 of them were appointed to the top job in their “own” ministry, 7 in others. All had been Sektionschefs before they became ministers. See the list in ALOIS CZEDIK, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien 1861-1916 IV: Zeitabschnitt 1908-1916* (Teschen–Wien–Leipzig 1922) xii ff.

the “Hof- und Staatshandbuch der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie” for the years 1901 to 1911 – I confined myself to the members of the *civil* service, not counting the military or the members of the High Courts. The agencies of the cisleithanian central government located in Vienna were as follows:

- “Ministerrats-Präsidium” [office of the Prime Minister]
- “Ministerium des Innern” [Ministry of the Interior, Home Office]
- “Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht” [Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education]
- “Justiz-Ministerium” [Ministry for Justice]
- “Finanz-Ministerium” [Ministry of Finance]
- “Handels-Ministerium” [Ministry of Commerce]
- “Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten” [Ministry for Public Works], established in 1908
- “Eisenbahn-Ministerium” [Ministry for Public Transport]
- “Ackerbau-Ministerium” [Ministry of Agriculture]

I also deliberately included the leading state-officials in the provinces, the Crown Lands [“Kronländer”],⁷ because they were also part of the hierarchy of central-government-officials. This was not the case with those who belonged to the so called autonomous administration of the Crown Lands, a group that is therefore not included in the present paper but that would merit a study on its own. As a result of these assumptions my sample consists of 361 people on duty in the various central ministries in Vienna and of 372 from the Crown Lands, which makes for a total of 733 men (there were no women among the higher ranks of the Civil Service at that time and only very few among the rank and file).

⁷ The term „Kronländer” is not quite correct in this respect, one should speak of higher administrative units of the state [“höhere staatliche Verwaltungsbezirke”] because not each land in a constitutional sense (possessing a parliament, a “Landtag” of its own) corresponded to a higher administrative unit with a Governor at the head of a “Statthalterei” or a “Landespräsidium”. Tirol and Vorarlberg together were administered by the “Statthalterei” at Innsbruck; Görz-Gradisca, Istrien and Triest formed together the province of “Küstenland” headed by the Statthalterei at Triest. Cf. ERNST MISCHLER, JOSEF ULBRICH (Hgg.), Österreichisches Staatswörterbuch. Handbuch des gesamten österreichischen öffentlichen Rechtes IV (Wien² 1907), Art. Länder C/I: Landesordnungen (Geltendes Recht) 395-430, here 411 f. (Ludwig Spiegel). For convenience’ sake I stick however to the term „Crown Lands”.

Behörde	Beamte 1901-1910	Verwaltungsgebiete	Beamte 1901-1910
Ministerrats-Präsidium	7	Böhmen	59
Ministerium des Innern	48	Bukowina	9
Ministerium f. Kultus u. Unterricht	37	Dalmatien	14
Justiz-Ministerium	25	Galizien	67
Finanz-Ministerium	58	Kärnten	9
Handels-Ministerium	57	Krain	6
Ministerium für öffentl. Arbeiten	58	Küstenland	30
Eisenbahn-Ministerium	35	Mähren	32
Ackerbau-Ministerium	36	Niederösterreich	70
		Oberösterreich	14
		Salzburg	6
		Schlesien	8
		Steiermark	25
		Tirol u. Vorarlberg	23
insgesamt	361	insgesamt	372

It is only for the year 1910 that we have exact numbers as to the total of all the civil servants in Cisleithania.⁸ On September 1st, 1910, there were altogether 55.367 civil servants (ranks I-XI) (excluding the ones employed at the “Landesverteidigungsministerium” [Ministry for Defence] and the various High Courts the number is 54.944):

⁸ Because of imminent negotiations in Parliament on a Civil Service Act (“Dienstpragmatik”) the “Statistische Zentralkommission” and the Ministry of Finance made a detailed survey on the number of civil servants employed in different agencies, their duration in office, their standard of education and so on. For parts of the results see Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Verwaltungsarchiv [AVA], Ministerium des Innern [MdI], Präsidiale 33-33/1, 1900-1918, K. 2215, Zl. ad 4187/1911.

	Konzepts- beamte	insgesamt	Absolventen d. Hochschulen u. ähnl. Institute
Reichsrat + Staatsschuldenkomm.	4	41	16
Ministerratspräsidium	27	57	27
Ministerium des Innern	2853	5612	3450
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	102	242	132
<i>davon Polit. Landesbehörden</i>	2257	4400	2751
Ministerium für Kultus u. Unter- richt	239	827	642
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	84	138	86
<i>davon Landesschulräte</i>	93	244	233
Justiz-Ministerium	6805	11887	6822
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	55	86	55
<i>davon Gerichtsbehörden</i>	6303	11211	6306
Finanz-Ministerium	3262	18934	3946
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	237	1051	248
<i>davon Landesbehörden</i>	2607	16287	3237
Handels-Ministerium	855	13261	1476
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	171	1014	318
<i>Postbehörden</i>	599	10048	910
Ministerium für öffentl. Arbeiten	117	2085	1611
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	79	401	274
<i>davon Baudienst</i>	12	1044	1002
Eisenbahn-Ministerium	172	521	337
Ackerbau-Ministerium	149	1799	1495
<i>davon Zentrale</i>	77	221	133
Oberster Rechnungshof	12	80	12
Zusammen	14582	55367	19968

The table does not show all the institutions affiliated to the various ministries, therefore the numbers do not add up to the sums total.

Out of the 55.367 civil servants employed in 1910 1 was classed in the I. rank (Konrad Prinz Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, who had been prime Minister for a couple of weeks in 1906 and then returned to his former post of Statthalter in the Austrian Litoral [Küstenland]), 2 belonged to the II. rank, the Statthalter of Lower Austria, Erich Graf Kielmansegg, and the Statthalter of Styria, Manfred Graf Clary und Aldringen, both former Prime Ministers, 11 (20, if the people at the various Courts of Justice are counted as well) to the III. rank, 87 (94) to the IV. rank and 352 (509) to the V.

Returning to the much more restricted scope of our sample, which however covers a decade and not only one single year, and looking at the expansion of the civil servants in the Viennese ministries and in the provinces on a year-to-year basis, one can certainly make out a growth in absolute numbers, but the

growth was far from even; in 1901 there were 107 senior officials employed in the Viennese central offices and 88 in the Crown Lands. 10 years later in the ministries their number had doubled, in the Crown Lands the growth was even more pronounced (about 120%). Yet there were offices with a very moderate rise in numbers. The Ministry of the Interior for example had 20 senior officials at the beginning of the period under consideration and exactly the same number at the end and in between the number never rose to more than 21. Other ministries witnessed a sizeable expansion of their staff: the Ministry of Commerce from 16 to 29, the Ministry of Finance from 26 to 36, the Ministry for Public Transport – which had been established as late as 1896 – from 18 to 30. In 1910 the number of senior officials in the Ministry for Public Works, which was founded in 1908, equalled that of the Ministry for Public Transport. All this did not happen purely by chance. It was in these “new” ministries that the growing demands on the activities of public administration showed themselves most vehemently. For obvious reasons it was the Ministry of Finance which adamantly opposed each increase in the personnel, mustering all kinds of arguments against new appointments. Only if other ministers could claim “higher political considerations” the Minister of Finance – whose office incidentally was responsible for the highest rise – grudgingly had to give in.

In the Crown Lands the growth did not follow a uniform pattern either. There were provinces like Bohemia or Lower Austria where the rise in numbers of civil servants amounted to 50 % or more between 1905 and 1910 (in Lower Austria from 24 to 36 in absolute numbers). In Galicia, the biggest and most populated province of Cisleithania, there were 37 senior officials in 1910 against 15 ten years before. The reason for such a spectacular rise may well be found in the vastly growing administrative assignments – a growth on technical grounds, so to speak –, yet there is also a more political reason: the wish on the part of the provinces to create (albeit under the umbrella of the state) an administration which would have an eye more on the interests of the province than to orientate itself on the interests of the central government.

In smaller Crown Lands like Carinthia, Carniola, Salzburg or Silesia there was absolutely no rise in numbers as far as top positions are concerned: all these lands managed with 3 or 4 senior officials. It has to be mentioned, however, that in these lands the administration of justice was subordinated to higher courts in other provinces. Thus the presidents of the “Landesgerichte” in Klagenfurt (Carinthia) or in Troppau/Opava (Silesia) are listed among the personnel of Styria or Moravia.

As mentioned before, the sample of my survey amounts to 733 men which, however, filled only 292 administrative posts, so the turnover of staff was considerable. As one would expect there were very few individuals who remained on the same post or in the same rank, respectively, for the entire ten years covered in this survey. But such people did exist. Erich Graf Kielmansegg served as Statthalter of Lower Austria for 22 years, from 1889 to 1911,

only interrupted by a mere three month in 1895 when he acted as Provisional Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.⁹ His colleague in Bohemia, Karl Graf Coudenhove, also was in office for the entire time-span under consideration. But these were in a way “political” posts. Sporadically examples may also be found among “pure” civil servants in the ministries: Franz Xaver Freiherr von Buschmann served for more than 10 years as Ministerialrat in the Ministry of Finance, Severin Ritter von Kniažolucki equally long as Sektionschef in the same ministry and Leo Beck Ritter von Managetta und Lerchenau in the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education. One could cite a few more examples, but these cases were exceptions to the rule. Statistically speaking an individual remained in the same rank for less than 5 years, then he moved on to another rank, another post – or retired.

The duration of service in the same rank can be seen in the following table¹⁰:

	-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-15	Insges.
III.	4	2	2	2	3		1	6	20
IV.	25	19	12	12	10	4	2	10	94
V.	137	94	73	55	41	24	19	66	509

Obviously a succession of generations has taken place in the years immediately preceding 1910, a development which is also born out by the fact that among the leading senior officials many new names appear in the period just before the outbreak of World War I.

Resulting from the idea of the civil servants being personal servants to the crown, the civil service was on principle a lifelong job;¹¹ it was only from 1896 onwards that civil servants at the age of 60 were allowed to retire after 35 years in office.¹² If they wanted to quit their job earlier – or the government wanted to get rid of them – retirement on the grounds of failing health was the only possible way. It is interesting to see that some of those who pleaded for failing

⁹ Specific information on individual persons is either derived from memoir literature or from documents in AVA, MdI, Präs. 4 and AVA, Standesausweise. On Kielmansegg see [ERICH GRAF KIELMANSEGG], *Kaiserhaus, Staatsmänner und Politiker. Aufzeichnungen des k. k. Statthalters Erich Graf Kielmansegg. Mit einer Einleitung von Walter Goldinger* (Wien 1966).

¹⁰ AVA, MdI, Präs. 33-33/1 (1900-1918), K. 2215, Zl. ad 4187/1911.

¹¹ ALFRED HOFFMANN, *Bürokratie insbesondere in Österreich*; in: HEINRICH FICHTEAU, ERICH ZÖLLNER (Hgg.), *Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte Österreichs* (Wien 1974) 13-31. WALTRAUD HEINDL, *Gehorsame Rebellen. Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780-1848* (=Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung 38, Wien 1990). WALTER STEINDL, *Die Hochbürokratie. Ihre Funktion und ihre Zusammensetzung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhältnisse in der österreichischen Reichshälfte der Donaumonarchie 1840-1870*, phil. Diss. (Wien 1974). WALTER GOLDINGER, *Die Wiener Hochbürokratie 1848-1918*; in: *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 117 (1980) 310-333.

¹² MEGNER, *Beamte* 155.

health lived on for another decade or so after their retirement: Franz Graf Merveldt, Statthalter in Tyrol, who disagreed with Prime Minister Ernest von Koerber about the proper line of policy to be pursued as regards the nationality question, resigned in 1901 (at that time he was 57 years of age) and died as late as 1916.¹³ Yet, at least in one case the health problems caused by the exigencies of public service seem to have been serious: at the end of 1909 Ministerialrat Franz Kaltenbrunn was retired because of insanity and soon after he ended his days in an asylum. Tragic as this case may have been, it was remarkable, to say the least, that only slightly more than half a year before he was sent to hospital he was promoted to the rank of Ministerialrat and on this occasion his official performance was lavishly praised.¹⁴ In other cases the superiors were less discreet. When Sektionschef Eduard Swoboda Edler von Fernau came in for retirement on grounds of failing health in 1909 (by then he was only 53 years of age) the Minister of the Interior Guido Freiherr von Haerdtl, who himself was a member of the Civil Service Corps, supported this request, blandly adding “zumal es ... aus dienstlichen Rücksichten nicht tunlich erschiene, einen kränklichen Beamten mit geminderter Leistungsfähigkeit auch noch weiterhin im aktiven Dienst zu belassen”,¹⁵ a formulation used whenever a minister tried to get rid of one of his top officials and replace him by somebody else. Such “political” replacements happened at times; more often they were thought of without eventually being effectuated: In the same year 1909 the new Minister of Finance Leon Ritter von Biliński offered the post of Sektionschef to Alexander von Spitzmüller (who had also been a candidate for that ministry). In order to get free the post the then Sektionschef would have to be given another – minor – assignment, yet Spitzmüller declined and nothing came of it.¹⁶

Candidates for the civil service usually started their career at some subordinate department somewhere in the provinces, serving there at different posts for a couple of years. If they were lucky – or more often if they enjoyed the right kind of patronage – they were then called into a central office in Vienna, assiduously climbing the career-ladder. To cite but one example: Anton Simionelli (born in 1860) entered the Civil Service Corps in 1882 in Dalmatia, where he served at various posts in “Bezirkshauptmannschaften” and in the “Statthaltereirei”. 1888 he was summoned to the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna, serving in different departments, 1902 he became Ministerialrat, in 1909 Sektion-

¹³ ANTON BUNDSMANN, *Die Landeschefs von Tirol und Vorarlberg in der Zeit von 1815 bis 1913* (=Schlern-Schriften 117, Innsbruck 1954) 169 ff.

¹⁴ AVA, MdI, Präs. 4, Minister 1907-1915, K. 1362, Zl. 5471/1909, Referentenerinnerung vom 4. Mai 1909. Ebd. Zl. 13241/1909, Au. Vortrag vom 17. Dezember 1909.

¹⁵ Ebd. Präs. 4, Sekt.Chefs 1900-1918, K.1363, Zl. 10019/1909, Au. Vortrag vom 18. August 1909.

¹⁶ ALEXANDER SPITZMÜLLER, „... und hat auch Ursach, es zu lieben“ (Wien-München-Stuttgart-Zürich 1955) 71 f.

schef.¹⁷ In former times it had been usual for younger civil servants to be moved around to various Crown Lands doing duty on many places, thereby getting to know many regions of the Habsburg Monarchy, coming into contact with all sorts of people and widening their own horizon. For a number of reasons and much to the chagrin of some high officials this usage was given up at the end of the 19th century and in most cases the civil servants either remained for the rest of their career in the Crown Land they had started or were summoned to Vienna at a comparatively early stage without the prospect of ever being returned to the provinces. “Der große Horizont des übernationalen Beamtentums Altösterreichs ... verengte sich”, Rudolf Sieghart regretfully stated, and Graf Kielmansegg lamented that the civil servants in the ministries „nur noch den grünen Tisch kannten und keine Erfahrung in der Exekutive besaßen sowie jeden Kontakt mit der Bevölkerung verloren hatten“.¹⁸

Once the civil servants had reached the upper echelons, most of the senior officials remained at their posts, either the ministry in Vienna or the Statthaltereien in the Crown Lands, and hoped for promotion into the next higher rank. Exceptions to this general trend were some high officials from Galicia who for political reasons more frequently changed their assignment between the capital and their homeland. Edwin von Plázek for example served for quite a while as Ministerialrat at the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education before returning to Galicia as Vice-President of the Galician “Landesschulrat” (and being elevated to the IV. rank “ad personam”, a rank which was usually conferred only to Sektionschefs). His post in the ministry was given to another Pole, Ludwik Ćwikliński.¹⁹

In the ministries 46 out of a total of 274 Ministerialräte were promoted to the highest post, that of Sektionschefs. For the others – or as an intermediate measure while waiting for a free post – there was at least the chance to be conferred “title and character” of the next rank (which not only meant an honorary advantage over other colleagues – and potential rivals – and to get a higher salary, but very often that was the only means to break up the tight corset of the rigorous advancement-scheme). Rigorous as this scheme was, some individuals climbed the career-ladder faster than others, overleaping those that in the order

¹⁷ AVA, Mdl, Präsi. 4, Sekt.Chefs 1900-1918 Zl. 4611/1909, Au. Vortrag vom 1. April 1909. Apart from information provided in the Au. Vorträge on the occasion of promoting somebody to a higher rank, biographical details are also to be found in the “Standesausweise” of every civil servant usually also kept at the AVA.

¹⁸ MEGNER, Beamte 250. RUDOLF SIEGHART, Die letzten Jahrzehnte einer Großmacht. Menschen, Völker, Probleme des Habsburger-Reichs (Berlin 1932) 267 f. [KIELMANSEGG], Kaiserhaus, Staatmänner und Politiker 349 f.

¹⁹ WALTER LEITSCH, Ludwik Ćwikliński (1853-1943), Sektionschef und Minister im k.k. Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht; in: WALTER LEITSCH, STANISŁAW TRAWKOWSKI (Hgg.), Polen im alten Österreich. Kultur und Politik (=Wiener Archiv für Geschichte des Slawentums und Osteuropas 16, Wien-Köln-Weimar 1993) 56-78, here 60 f.

of precedence were ranking above, yet were deemed by their superiors as “less qualified”. When Anton Simonelli was promoted to the rank of Ministerialrat in 1902, special mention was made of the fact that by doing so he was given preferential treatment to a “bereits wiederholt übergangenen Funktionär”.²⁰

As mentioned before, transfers in the personnel of senior officials from one province to another, from the ministries to the Crown Lands or vice versa and from one ministry to another were not the rule, but they did happen. Karl Freiherr Heinold von Udyński swapped his job as Governor of Silesia for that of Moravia. Konrad Prinz Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst was at first Governor of the Bucovina, afterwards of the Austrian Litoral, in 1906 he was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, only to return to his post in Trieste a few weeks later. Viktor Freiherr von Hein, who had been Governor of Carniola in Laibach/Ljubljana for 13 years, was called to Vienna in 1905 to become Sektionschef in the Ministry of the Interior. This move was motivated by political considerations: Hein had become extremely unpopular – to say the least – with leading politicians in Carniola, so he was “praised away” and a high order was awarded on him, so that “jede abträgliche Deutung seiner Enthebung von dem solange selbständig bekleideten Posten hintangehalten würde”.²¹ Erasmus Freiherr von Handel did it the other way round: he left his Viennese job as Ministerialrat for that of Governor in Dalmatia (where he also encountered difficulties because of his lack of knowledge of the Croat language²²) and then in Upper Austria (in 1916 he returned to Vienna as Sektionschef and for the first half of the year 1917 as Minister of the Interior).²³

Such transfers occurred in other ministries as well. August Ritter von Pitreich first served at the Ministry for Justice and then went to the Styrian capital of Graz to become President of the High Court of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola [Oberlandesgerichtspräsident]. Alexander Spitzmüller, Ministerialrat at the Ministry of Finance, remained in Vienna, but rose to the position of Deputy Chief of the Lower Austrian fiscal authorities [Vizepräsident der Finanzlandesdirektion].²⁴ Although now outside the innermost circles of the ministry he was called upon to be part of the ministry’s delegation in dealing with the Hungarians on economic and fiscal matters (the so called economic compromise). After some years at the head of the most renowned bank in Aus-

²⁰ AVA, MdI, Präs. 4, Min.Räte 1900-1918, K. 1364, Zl. 4264/1902, Au. Vortrag vom 5. Juni 1902.

²¹ Ebd. Präs. 4, Sekt.Chefs 1900-1918, K. 1363, Au. Vortrag vom 23. September 1905

²² GÜNTHER SCHÖDL, Kroatische Nationalpolitik und ‚Jugoslawenstvo‘. Studien zu nationaler Integration und regionaler Politik in Kroatien-Dalmatien am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts (=Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 89, München 1990) 305-309.

²³ [ERASMUS HANDEL], Erinnerungen des Erasmus Freiherr von Handel, hrg. von Max Freiherr Hussarek von Heinlein; in: Jahrbuch der österreichischen Leo-Gesellschaft 1939 48-51.

²⁴ SPITZMÜLLER, Ursach 52.

tria he returned to the service of the state by becoming Minister of Commerce in November 1915.²⁵

Changes within various ministries and other central agencies were also not uncommon. Leopold Graf Auersperg, whose first post of some importance was that of a *Bezirkshauptmann* in a Lower Austrian District, was then sent to the *Statthaltere* in Upper Austria and eventually became *Sektionschef* in the Ministry of the Interior where he headed the department for trade and commerce. When these fields of activity were transferred to the Ministry of Commerce in 1905 Auersperg was also transferred and became the factual head of the ministry. Some years later he was appointed Minister of Agriculture.²⁶ One of his fellow officials was Alfred Ritter von Fries-Skene who started his career in Carinthia, moved on to Lower Austria and then to the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education. After a short term at the Office of the Prime Minister he was transferred to Auersperg's department at the Ministry of the Interior. Together with his boss he moved on to the Ministry of Commerce where he rose to the rank of *Sektionschef*. In 1909 the then Minister of the Interior called him back into his own ministry, because he wanted somebody "der mit den regen Wechselbeziehungen zwischen politischem, sozialem und wirtschaftlichem Leben vertraut ist".²⁷ At times the tight corset of the permanent Civil Service Corps was loosened a bit and was made more permeable: because of his expertise in economic matters Richard Riedl, who until then had been employed at the Viennese Chamber of Commerce, was called into the Ministry of Commerce and was appointed right away to the position of *Sektionschef extra statum*.²⁸ A similar case was that of the already mentioned Ludwik Ćwikliński who had been a renowned professor at the University of Lemberg/Lwów and for two years also member of the Austrian Reichsrat. In 1902 he was appointed Ministerialrat in the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education without ever having been member of the Civil Service Corps; in 1904 he was given the rank of *Sektionschef ad personam* and he was entrusted with the creation of a new department specialized on affairs of the universities.²⁹

Most of the transfers from one administrative body to another were motivated on material grounds. This holds true especially for the Ministry of Public Works, established in 1908, which drew experts from many other agencies. Of a total of 36 high civil servants employed in this ministry between 1908 and 1910 13 came from other central agencies (3 from the Ministry of Commerce, 3

²⁵ Ebd.

²⁶ MIHA PREINFALK, Auersperg. *Geschichte einer europäischen Familie* (Graz–Stuttgart 2006) 375.

²⁷ AVA, MdI, Präs. 4, Sekt.Chefs 1900-1918, K. 1363, Zl. 10019/1909, Au. Vortrag vom 18. August 1909. Later on Fries-Skene became Landespräsident of Carinthia, during the First World War Statthalter of the Austrian Litoral.

²⁸ AVA, Staatskanzlei-BKA alt/Varia, K. 252, Standesausweise.

²⁹ LEITSCH, Ludwig Ćwikliński 62 ff.

from the Ministry of the Interior, 3 from the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education, 2 from the Ministry of Agriculture, 1 from the Ministry of Finance and 1 from the provincial administration of Galicia). Yet at times it was not only material grounds that were responsible for such transfers, personal contacts could also play a decisive role. The career of Robert Davy (born 1867) may serve as a good example. He started off his career in Silesia and soon after came to the Ministry of the Interior. Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Ernest von Koerber wanted a reliable person to head the press department of the Office of the Prime Minister, so Davy was installed there in 1902. When Koerber resigned at the end of 1904 the new Prime Minister wanted to “return” Davy to the Ministry of the Interior which was not too happy about this transaction, although it acknowledged the fact that Davy was a “sehr schätzenswerte Arbeitskraft”. Although Davy worked with the Ministry from 1905 onwards it nevertheless lasted until 1908 before he was officially transferred to the Ministry. Yet it was clear that Davy’s chances for a speedy career were slight, so in 1911 he changed over to the newly created “Kommission zur Förderung der Verwaltungsreform” under Erwin von Schwarzenau. When this agency was dissolved in 1916 Davy had to change again. He met with opposition from some officials in the Ministry of the Interior, but luckily enough for Davy his old chief Schwarzenau became Minister soon afterwards and he immediately promoted him to the rank of Sektionschef, a position he certainly deserved.³⁰

By judging from the examples mentioned so far one might get the impression that even at the beginning of the 20th century the High Civil Service Corps in Austria was still dominated by the aristocracy or at least by the nobility. However, such an impression is totally misleading. If one breaks down the 733 persons making up our sample into the three categories of aristocracy (Fürsten, Grafen, Freiherrn), lesser nobility (Ritter von, Edle von, simple “von”) and non-nobles, one can see that the aristocracy accounted for 16 % (115 persons), roughly one quarter belonged to the lesser nobility (176 persons), and the rest – that is more than 60 % or 448 people – were non-titled. In evaluating these figures one has also to take into account that the group of the lesser nobility comprises also the great number of those senior officials (the so called “Beamtenadel”), who were only recently ennobled usually as a reward for their services rendered to the state during their civil service career. One has also to bear in mind that in social terms the aristocracy and the so called “Zweite Gesell-

³⁰ AVA, Mdl, Präs. 4, Minister 1900-1906, K. 1360, Zl. 502/1905, Ministerratspräsidium an Ministerium des Innern vom 21. Jänner 1905. Ebd. Präs. 4, Minister 1907-1913, K. 1362, Zl. 11472/1907, Ministerium des Innern an Ministerratspräsidium vom 17. Jänner 1908. Ebd. Zl. 6368/1911, Ministerratspräsidium an Ministerium des Innern vom 24. Juni 1911. Ebd. Präs. 4, Minister 1914-1918, K. 1361, Zl. 23.199/1916 Ministerratspräsidium an Ministerium des Innern vom 8. Oktober 1916, Zl. 28562/1916, Einsichtsakt vom 14. Dezember 1916.

schaft” (lesser nobility and well-to-do bourgeois) were two distinct social formations and did hardly mingle.³¹

Differentiating between senior officials on duty in the central agencies in Vienna and those in the Crown Lands, the figures are as follows:

	Vienna		Lands		total	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
aristocracy	53	14,7	62	16,7	115	15,7
lesser nobility	104	28,8	72	19,3	176	24,1
non-titled	205	56,7	237	64,0	448	61,2

In other words the share of the aristocracy was slightly higher in the Crown Lands than in Vienna, the portion of the non-nobles was significantly higher in the provinces, and the “Beamtenadel” was concentrated in Vienna. At times figures can be misleading, though. The strong position of the aristocracy among the senior officials in the Crown Lands should not be generalized. It was the result of a specific situation in the Alpine lands of Salzburg, Tyrol, Upper Austria, but also smaller lands like Carniola or Silesia, where the percentage of aristocratic civil servants amounted to between one third and even half of the total number. Numerically the representation of aristocrats was highest in Lower Austria (with 11 out of 70), but their relative weight was much less. In lands like Bohemia or Galicia even the absolute numbers were low (2 and 4 respectively). Here it was usually only the Statthalter who belonged to the high nobility; the great majority of the senior officials were non-titled.

Similar discrepancies can be seen if one looks closely at the situation in the ministries. In the period under consideration there was just one single aristocrat among the senior officials of the Ministry of Justice, but 11 out of 35 in the Ministry of Agriculture. This is a clear indication of the agricultural interests predominating in the landed aristocracy even at the beginning of the 20th century. In absolute numbers even more, namely 12 (out of 48), members of the high nobility were on duty at the Ministry of the Interior (more than half of them rose to the rank of Sektionschef, whereas in other ministries this share was much less). Their motivation was entirely different from the one in the Ministry of Agriculture. It was the representative status still attached to the nobility by the society at large that counted, the prestige accrued to them by many people. And what is more, on the part of many a nobleman such a position could be seen as a far cry from feudal times, an attempt to transform some of the powers and privileges as well as obligations previously held and performed by them in their own right into the new structure of a modern and effi-

³¹ ADAM WANDRUSZKA, Die „Zweite Gesellschaft” der Donaumonarchie; in: HEINZ SIEGERT (Hg.), *Adel in Österreich* (Wien 1971) 56-67.

cient state.³² Conversely, the high proportion of the lesser nobility is indicative of the efforts on parts of the ruling class, still committed to a basically feudal understanding of society, to square older ideas of the proper social order with the needs and requirements of a modern bureaucratic system by ennobling the protagonists of this very bureaucratic machinery, protagonists which were in most cases stern adherents of the idea of meritocracy.

One of the consequences of the creation of such a bureaucratic system was that on the personal side veritable dynasties of bureaucrats came into being, dynasties whose existence can be seen even if looking at the short time-span of 10 years, as is the case in the present sample. In this respect the most outstanding example is certainly set by the 5 Freiherrn von Buschman listed in the sample. Three of them were Ministerialräte and Sektionschefs respectively in the Ministry for Public Transport, the fourth in the Ministry of Finance and the last one in the Ministry of Commerce. Others might be cited as well: take for example the Sektionschef in the Ministry for Public Transport Karel Marek and his cousin Viktor Marek, director of the “Staatseisenbahngesellschaft” in Prague,³³ or Eugen, Leo and Paul Beck von Managetta und Lerchenau, who were Ministerialräte and Sektionschefs in the Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Education respectively. Ministerialrat Alfred Weber Ritter von Ebenhof was employed first at the Ministry of the Interior (after a distinguished career as a technician he was finally called up in the central authority)³⁴ and then at the Ministry of Public Works. His brother Ernst Weber Ritter von Ebenhof was Sektionschef at the cabinet-office of the Emperor. They had a nephew, Friedrich Kleinwaechter, who later on should also embark on a career in the service of the government. It was Friedrich’s uncle Ernst who paved the way for the young man by recommending him to a friend of his, another high ranking civil servant in the Ministry of Finance.³⁵ Careers of father and son or uncle and nephew were not infrequent in those days, although to get a full understanding of this phenomenon it would be necessary to extend this survey to a much longer time-span than has been done here.

There can be no doubt that especially at the beginning of a career the support of relatives or other patrons was helpful. Yet, the most intense patronage was of no avail if the young fellow did not dispose of certain abilities which he could acquire only by himself. A sound education was one of these prerequi-

³² In an as yet unpublished article on the aristocracy in Cisleithania Hannes Stekl characterizes the situation of the aristocracy as dominated by the tension between loss in importance, rearguard actions, flexible adjustment, self-assertion and endeavours to keep their identity as an elite formation. I thank Hannes Stekl for letting me see this article.

³³ PAVLA VOŠAHLÍKOVÁ (Hg.), *Von Amts wegen. K.k. Beamte erzählen* (=Damit es nicht verlorengelht ... 37, Wien–Köln–Weimar 1998) 249 ff., 351.

³⁴ AVA, Mdl, Präs. 4, Min.räte 1900-1918, K. 1364, Zl. 4386/1904, Referentenerinnerung vom 18. Juni 1904.

³⁵ FRIEDRICH KLEINWÄCHTER, *Der fröhliche Präsidialist* (Wien 1947) 16.

sites. Apart from achievements which resulted from a strict adherence to the performance principle [Leistungsprinzip] in the kind of education thought appropriate for future civil servants special emphasis was also put on the development of a certain group-mentality.³⁶ Such a combination of educational training and mental formation was offered already at the “Gymnasien”, secondary schools, amongst which the “Theresianische Akademie” in Vienna played a prominent part in the preparation of future high civil servants.³⁷ The graduates of the “Theresianum” were indeed a special bunch, supporting each other whenever possible – obviously networking is not an entirely new invention. Therefore they had better career chances than others – at least, that’s what those who did not belong to this group enviously said of their colleagues who therefore met with widespread aversion!³⁸ In the sample which forms the material basis for this article one can also find some “Theresianisten”, graduates of the “Theresianum”, some of them rose to highest positions, for example Arthur Graf Bylandt-Rheydt, Sektionschef at the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education, later on Statthalter of Upper Austria and in the end Minister in his “old” ministry and finally Minister of the Interior, or Prime Minister Richard Freiherr von Bienerth. Others were not so successful. To mention but one, Franz Joseph Nagy de Somlyó graduated in 1876 from that school. After some minor posts he became Ministerialrat at the Ministry of the Interior in 1902 and remained so until his retirement in 1916 (on which occasion he was conferred the title of Sektionschef).³⁹

After passing the “Matura”, the school leaving exam, the prospective senior official enrolled in the university, in all probability to study law, since that was the requirement for employment as future higher civil servants, as “Konzeptsbeamte” to use the German expression. It must be said, however, that from the last third of the 19th century onwards the completion of studies other than law was also accepted as fulfilling the requirement for entry.⁴⁰ As regards the study of law, for the purpose of admittance to the civil service the passing of three final exams, “Staatsprüfungen” in German, was regarded as adequate, whereas the passing of the so-called “Rigorosum”, which was the prerequisite for obtaining the doctorate and the start of an academic career, was not necessary. Practical instruction together with internal socialization was thus given preference over academic education.⁴¹ The importance accrued to internal

³⁶ GERNOT STIMMER, *Eliten in Österreich 1848-1970*, 2 Bde. (=Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung 57, Wien-Köln-Weimar 1997), here I 66.

³⁷ Ebd. I 96 ff.

³⁸ GOLDINGER, *Hochbürokratie* 325 f. [KIELMANSEGG], *Kaiserhaus, Staatsmänner und Politiker* 306 ff.

³⁹ AVA, MdI, Präs. 4, Minister 1914-1918, K. 1361, Zl. 10472/1916, Au. Vortrag vom 5. Mai 1916.

⁴⁰ MEGNER, *Beamte* 20 ff.

⁴¹ STIMMER, *Eliten* I 70.

socialization is also elucidated by the fact that a special internal exam, the “Dienstprüfung”, was required, the passing of which was an absolute must for everybody at that time (it was only in earlier decades that in the case of an aristocrat the authorities sometimes did without such a “Dienstprüfung”), while under certain exceptional circumstances the authorities could dispense with the formal criteria of education, the university diplomas.⁴²

In spite of the emphasis put on practical elements as far as the study of law is concerned, the attraction of an academic title grew in the course of the 19th century. The great overall number of civil servants with an academic degree or having passed a comparable kind of higher education can be seen in the table on p.194. Concentrating on our sample, one third of all the senior officials on duty in the central ministries had the academic title of JDr. (121 out of 361), in the Crown Lands the percentage was a little less (under 30 %). It is somewhat astonishing, that the highest proportion of JDr. should be found in the Ministry of Finance, with more than half of the senior officials possessing an academic degree. At the opposite end of the scale one finds the Ministry of the Interior, with only 6 JDr. out of 48. To make up for this deficiency – if one might call it so – it is only fair to say that in this Ministry there were 7 other academics, much more than in any other agency. They were mostly physicians or Doctors of Philosophy. Among the officials of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education there were also some Dr.phil., mostly men who came from the universities, for example Ludwik Ćwikliński, already mentioned, or Karl Theodor von Inama-Sternegg and Franz Juraschek, both successive Presidents of the “Statistische Zentral-Kommission”. Technical engineers were a very small minority, even in those central agencies which had a direct bearing to technical issues. One has to bear in mind, however, that academic degrees in technology were a fairly new phenomenon at that time, therefore graduates of technical colleges with an academic degree were on the whole still too young to be already in a leading position in the Civil Service Corps. In general civil servants with an academic degree were rather young, whereas older officials very often got along without a full academic education.

Patronage could be useful not only at the beginning of a career but also at various later stages. The memoirs of leading civil servants contain interesting details on how they interceded with their superiors for their younger colleagues. Of course only those cases were passed on to posterity where later on the beneficiary proved himself worthy of having put in a good word for him.⁴³ Yet, apart from this individual patronage there were other kinds of patronage as well. Critics complained of exponents of political parties that tried to infiltrate the Civil Service Corps with their adherents, not primarily because they hoped

⁴² MEGNER, Beamte 25.

⁴³ SPITZMÜLLER, Ursach 56 f. ROBERT EHRHART, Im Dienste des alten Österreich (Wien 1958) 18-24, 65.

to influence the activities of the administration in general but as a kind of remuneration for services rendered. A Czech Member of Parliament stated once in the House: “Die politischen Dienste, welche [die Beamtenschaft] leistete, wurden im Wege des Avancements bezahlt. Die Besetzung der Beamtenposten wurde ... politisch beeinflusst und die ganze Administrative zum Gegenstand der erbitterten Kämpfe gemacht”.⁴⁴ He was seconded by a statement of an eminent specialist in public law who wrote of the candidates wanting to start their career: “Der Kandidat muß ein ‘sicherer Mann’ sein und sich der an ihm geübten Protektion auch würdig erweisen; selbstverständlich nicht durch Leistungen gegenüber dem Staate, sondern durch parteiische oder nationale Gegenleistungen, d. h. aus dem Beamten des Staates wird nur zu leicht der Agent einer Partei, er hat im Konfliktsfalle die Staatsinteressen den nationalen, parteiischen und anderen zu opfern”.⁴⁵

Obviously this particular jurist was a severe critic, it is doubtful whether the situation was really as bad as that; most memoirs of higher civil servants convey the picture of a strictly non-partisan Civil Service Corps. Yet it is true that politicians more often than not tried to influence “their” officials – and others as well – to act in a way conducive to the particular aims of a political party. And it is also true that individual civil servants acted in a very political way, propagating ideas of political parties even if they were hardly to be reconciled with the non-partisan ideal of the Austrian Civil Service Corps. In such cases transfer to another post was the usual measure to reprimand the “offender”, total removal from office was rare.⁴⁶ It was long doubtful whether civil servants were allowed to accept a seat in parliaments. Examples for such a “double-activity” exist, but the percentage of civil servants being at the same time parliamentarians declined all the way from 1861 to the end of the century. It was only in 1914 that a clear-cut rule was established: as long as a civil servant was a candidate for or a member of parliament, he was placed off duty.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ STENOGRAPHISCHE PROTOKOLLE über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates, XXI. Session, 84. Sitzung am 30. Mai 1912 4017 (Abg. Rašin).

⁴⁵ KARL BROCKHAUSEN, Österreichische Verwaltungsreformen. Sechs Vorträge in der Wiener Staatswissenschaftlichen Vereinigung (Wien–Leipzig 1911) 52.

⁴⁶ PETER URBANITSCH, Vom „Fürstendiener“ zum „politischen Beamten“? Die Beamtenschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie im 19. Jahrhundert (1914/18); in: ANNA GIANNA MANCA, FABIO RUGGE (Hgg.), Governo rappresentativo e dirigenza amministrativa (secoli XIX–XX)/Repräsentative Regierung und führende Beamte (19.–20. Jahrhundert) (Bologna und Berlin 2007), 149–174. SPITZMÜLLER, Ursach 72 f. GOLDINGER, Hochbürokratie 323 f.

⁴⁷ URBANITSCH, Vom „Fürstendiener“ zum „politischen Beamten“? FRANZ ADLGASSER, Kontinuität oder Wandel? Wahlreform und das österreichische Parlament 1861–1918; in: JIŘÍ GEORGIEV, JAN KYSELA (Hgg.), Kapitoly z dějin stavovského a parlamentního zřízení/Chapters from the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (Praha 2004) 71–84, here 79 and 82.

It is also a fact that especially in the last years of the Habsburg Monarchy some posts were traditionally “reserved” for members of a given nationality. When in 1906 Sektionschef Heinrich Ritter von Róza, who was of Polish origin, resigned his job at the Ministry of the Interior, it was clear to everybody, that „– entsprechend eines unter polnischen Abgeordneten laut gewordenen Wunsches – ein mit den galizischen Verhältnissen vertrauter Beamter für den Posten eines Sektionschefs in Aussicht genommen werde”.⁴⁸ It was the Statthalter of Galicia who recommended Georg Piwocki, another Pole, who until then had served only in Galicia. When 4 years later Piwocki resigned on grounds of failing health he was again succeeded by another Pole, by Julius Ritter von Kleeberg, a Protestant who had also spent most of his career in Galicia (before becoming Vice-president of the Galician Statthalterei he had been a member of one of the Viennese High Courts for 10 years, though).⁴⁹ The institution of a Polish senior official was not confined to the Ministry of the Interior. When Edwin von Plázek moved back from the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education to Galicia, the official in charge of the recruiting of civil servants in this ministry used almost the same words as his colleague in the Ministry of the Interior. He put special emphasis on the fact that “ein von einem Beamten polnischer Nationalität bekleideter höherer Posten zur Erledigung gelangt [ist]. Schon seit geraumer Zeit war es üblich und durch die Interessen der Unterrichtsverwaltung geboten, daß ein solches Amt von einem Manne versehen werde, welcher vermöge seiner Abstammung und seiner Beziehungen zum Heimatlande mit den Verhältnissen Galiziens vertraut und dadurch in der Lage wäre, seine diesfälligen Erfahrungen im Dienste der Ressortverwaltung mit Erfolg zu verwerten”.⁵⁰

The examples mentioned raise the question as to the denominational and ethnic affiliations of the members of the High Civil Service Corps, the more so if this group is considered an elite in a multiconfessional and multiethnic state. Yet to answer this question for the senior officials of the Habsburg Monarchy or its Austrian half is beset with grave methodological difficulties.

As to denominations, they were recorded in the registers of civil servants kept at each agency. Unfortunately many of these lists were destroyed in 1927 when the Viennese Palace of Justice, housing these archives, burned down. Therefore it is impossible to completely pin down the denominational affiliation of each and every single civil servant. Judgements passed can at best be

⁴⁸ AVA, MdI, Präs 4, Sekt.Chefs 1900-1918, K. 1363, Zl. 10471/1906, Referentenentwurf vom 28. Jänner 1907.

⁴⁹ Ebd., Zl. 2233/1910, Referentenentwurf vom 12. April 1910. WALTER GOLDINGER, Das polnische Element in der Wiener Hochbürokratie (1848-1918); in: *Studia Austro-Polonica* 1 (1978) 63-83, here 73.

⁵⁰ Cited by LEITSCH, Ludwig Ćwikliński 61.

tentative ones, being a more or less informed guess, but lacking concrete evidence.

After the passing of the fundamental laws of 1867 denominational affiliation should – in theory – have been no issue at all for a successful career in the Civil Service Corps. In practice, things were not quite like that. For Protestants, Uniates or members of the Orthodox Church serving in the Habsburg Monarchy, sometimes dubbed as “Catholic Great Power”, their religion made no difference at all at the beginning of the 20th century. Things were a bit different for Jews, especially for practising ones. Once a Jew converted to the Christian faith, however, there was nothing to prevent him from making a great career within the civil service and there is ample evidence for such a course. The most striking example is certainly that of Rudolf Sieghart, the son of a petty official at the Jewish religious community, the “Kultusgemeinde”, at Troppau/Opava in Silesia. In the course of only 12 years he made a comet-like career starting at the bottom rung of the ladder and bringing him up to the top position of “Erster Sektionschef”, a position that was likened by many to that of a Deputy Prime Minister. To be sure, Sieghart’s career was exceptional, but others were also quite successful.⁵¹

It is even more difficult to make precise statements as to ethnicity. This is a criterion that was not asked for in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Civil servants were asked to state their knowledge of languages,⁵² but it is impossible to deduce from these statements their nationality. Names are not helpful either. Who would think that Julius Ritter von Kleeberg, Ignaz Rosner or Eugen Hauenschild-Bauer were Poles, Franz Müller, Karl Marek and Oscar Freiherr von Villani were Czechs? More obvious are names like Severin Ritter von Kniažolucki or Kazimierz Ritter von Galecki (contemporaries passed differing judgements on his professional qualifications),⁵³ both Polish Sektionschefs in the Ministry of Finance, or Joseph Kaněra, a Czech by birth and Sektionschef at the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education, whose official conduct was praised by everyone.⁵⁴ In the case of Rinald Čulić, serving at the Minister-ratspräsidium and coming from Dalmatia, it was perhaps not even clear to himself whether he was an italianized South-Slave or a slavized Italian.⁵⁵

⁵¹ SIEGHART, Letzte Jahrzehnte. For a good portrait of his see EHRHART, Im Dienste des alten Österreich 132-142. See also ALFRED ABLEITINGER, Rudolf Sieghart (1866-1934) und seine Tätigkeit im Ministerratspräsidium. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der österreichischen Innenpolitik im ersten Jahrzehnt unseres Jahrhunderts, phil. Diss. (Graz 1964).

⁵² As a rule higher civil servants spoke several languages, not only German, French (and sometimes English), but at least one or more of the non-German languages used in the Habsburg Monarchy.

⁵³ GOLDINGER, Polnisches Element 66, 69. KLEINWÄCHTER, Fröhlicher Präsidialist 95-100. EHRHART, Im Dienste des alten Österreich 159.

⁵⁴ Ebd. 75, 94 ff.

⁵⁵ Ebd. 158.

Taking all the difficulties into account in ascertaining the proper ethnic attribution I found in the Viennese central offices 15 senior civil servants of Polish origin, whereas I could make out only 5 Czechs. But these numbers are no hard facts, a closer scrutiny of every single biography would certainly reveal more precise results. Another possibility to achieve this end would be to extend this survey to 1918/19 and examine in detail who of the senior officers active at that time opted for one of the Successor States, remained in the service of the now much smaller Republic of Austria or retired for good. But that – like so many others on the history of the Civil Service Corps – is a task that has to be kept for the future.

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